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OUTGOING MESSAGE

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SUBJECT: EUROPEAN BRIEF OCPAS-EUR 89-096 FOR 26 APRIL 1989.

FROM: DDI/O/CPAS.

CONTENTS

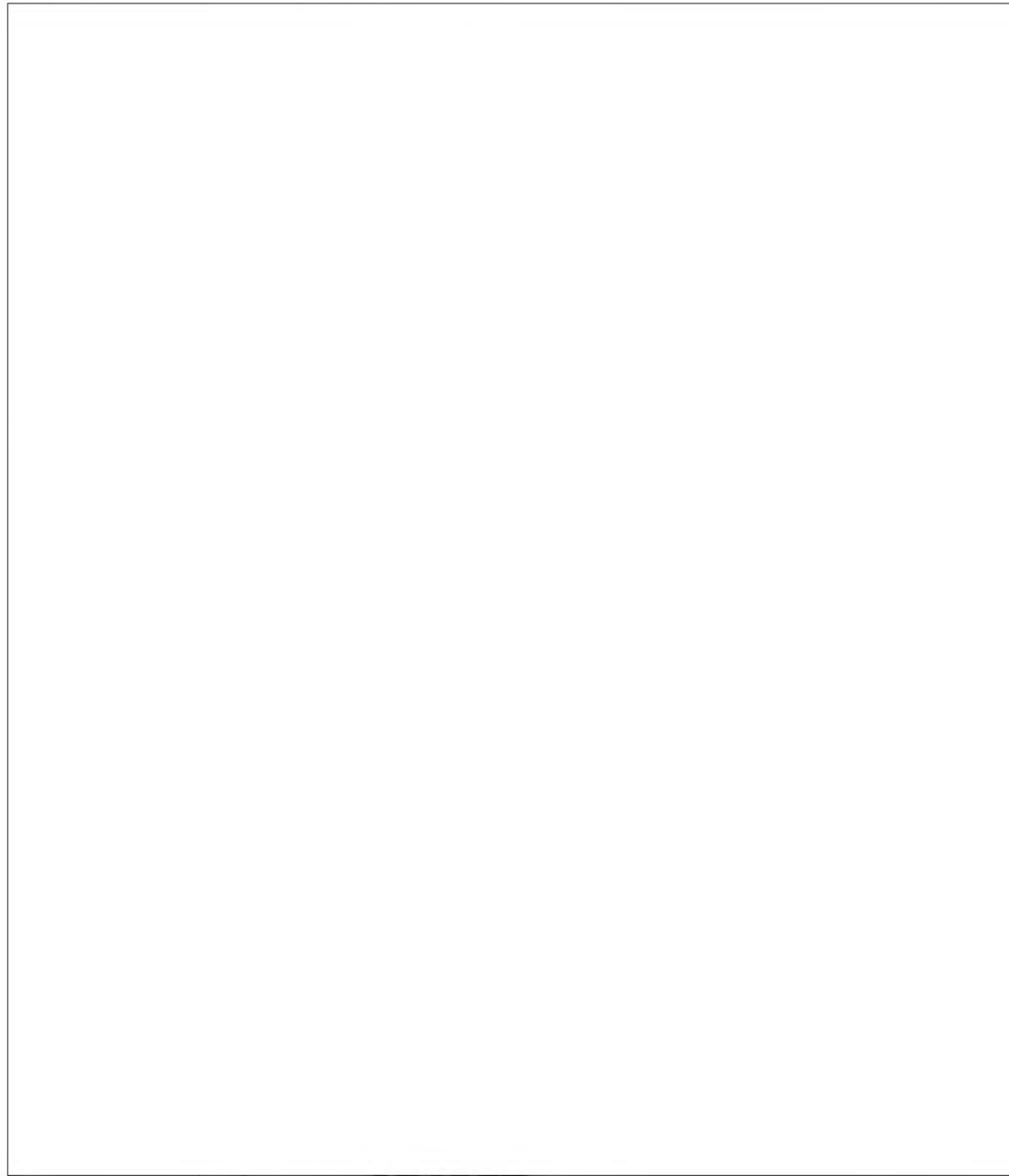
2. USSR: RIOT CONTROL AGENTS USED IN TBILISI

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: 29-Mar-2010

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OUTGOING
MESSAGE

2. USSR: RIOT CONTROL AGENTS USED IN TBILISI

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND SYMPTOMS OF SOVIET GEORGIAN VICTIMS SUGGEST THAT TROOPS USED TEAR GAS AND A VOMITING AGENT SEEKING TO QUELL NATIONALIST DEMONSTRATIONS.

THE RECENTLY APPOINTED PARTY CHIEF IN SOVIET GEORGIA SAID MONDAY THAT SOME OF THE 20 DEATHS IN AN ATTACK ON DEMONSTRATORS ON 9 APRIL WERE CAUSED BY POISON GAS, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS. HE NOTED THAT TWO DIFFERENT GASES HAD BEEN USED AND ADDED THAT MEDICAL SPECIALISTS HAD BEEN SENT TO HELP THOSE SUFFERING FROM THE POISONING.

BOTH THE VICTIMS AND MEMBERS OF AN OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED COMMISSION INVESTIGATING THE INCIDENT REPORT SYMPTOMS THAT INCLUDE SHARP HEADACHES, VOMITING, SKIN RASHES, MEMORY LOSS, AND IRREGULAR NERVE PARALYSIS, ACCORDING TO RECENT PRESS REPORTS. A SOVIET DEFENSE MINISTRY NEWSPAPER REPORTED THE USE OF THE TEAR GAS CHLOROACETOPHENONE (CN), BUT THE MILITARY HAS NOT DISCLOSED THE NATURE OF THE SECOND GAS.

COMMENT: THE SYMPTOMS DESCRIBED INDICATE THAT A VOMITING AGENT, PROBABLY DIPHENYLCHLOROARSENINE (DA), WAS USED, AS WELL AS A TEAR GAS. BOTH SUBSTANCES ARE DEFINED AS RIOT CONTROL AGENTS, FREQUENTLY, VOMITING AGENTS AND TEAR GASES ARE MIXED AND LOADED IN A BURNING MUNITION. A HIGH CONCENTRATION OF VOMITING AGENTS CAUSES LUNG DAMAGE, SEVERE COLD-LIKE SYMPTOMS, AND INTENSE HEADACHE ACCCOMPANIED BY CHEST PAIN, SHORTNESS OF BREATH, AND PROLONGED VOMITING. VICTIMS OF DA MAY HAVE AN UNSTEADY GAIT, VERTIGO, MUSCLE WEAKNESS, AND TREMBLING. IT MAY TAKE SEVERAL WEEKS TO RECOVER FROM SEVERE DOSES.

OUTGOING
MESSAGE

ALTHOUGH RIOT CONTROL AGENTS ARE REGARDED AS NONLETHAL, IN HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OR WITH PROLONGED EXPOSURE, BOTH TEAR GAS AND VOMITING AGENTS CAN KILL. PRESS REPORTS SAY THE CROWD IN TBILISI WAS TRAPPED AND UNABLE TO DISPERSE, A FACT THAT MAY ACCOUNT FOR THE DEATHS.

OUTGOING
MESSAGE

THE REPORT IN THE SOVIET DEFENSE MINISTRY NEWSPAPER IS THE FIRST PUBLIC ADMISSION TO POSSESSION OF CN. THE SOVIETS PREVIOUSLY HAVE ADMITTED ONLY TO HAVING ONE TYPE OF RIOT CONTROL AGENT CHLOROBENZAL MALONONITRILE--CS--IN THEIR MILITARY ARSENAL. THEY HAVE YET TO MENTION VOMITING AGENTS.

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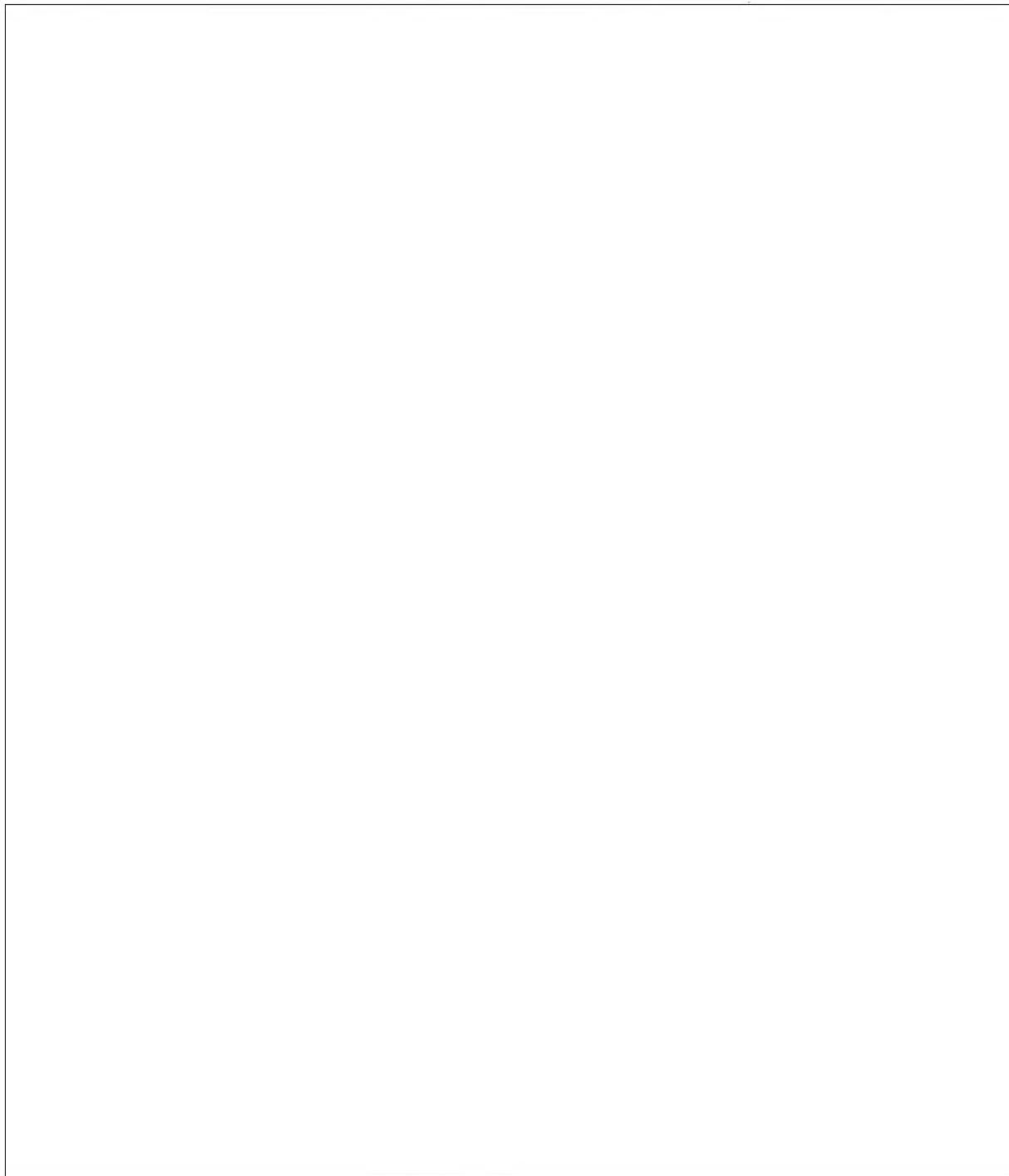
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